

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **BORDER COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING: GRANTS, INFORMATION SHARING, AND OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Mechanisms for empowering local communities and building local capacity can take several forms, including education/outreach, funding, technical assistance, and training. Key factors in community empowerment and improved capacity are access to accurate, credible, and timely information and participation in the decision making process.

Since the inception of the Border XXI Program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has sought to use a number of mechanisms and fora for involving and empowering local community residents; nongovernmental organizations; and tribal, state, and local governments. Since 1994, extensive outreach efforts have been underway by the Border Liaison Offices to help inform the border public about the various opportunities for their participation in the Border XXI Program. These are described in Chapter 2 and in Appendix 6 of the U.S.-Mexico Border XXI Progress Report 1996–2000.

Activities of the Environmental Information Resources Workgroup have provided multiple venues for dissemination of accurate and timely information, in both English and Spanish, including postings on the Border XXI web site, and the publication of flyers and fact sheets. These are described in the Environmental Information Resources chapter and in Appendix 6 of this report. In addition, EPA has provided resources and technical assistance to communities, nongovernmental organizations, and tribal governments, facilitating the development of extensive environmental education programs, *promotores* programs, community health projects, model recycling projects, and other efforts to serve the communities in the border region. A list of the U.S.-Mexico Border Community Grants awarded to communities in 1995 and 1997 is provided in this appendix.

Some specific examples of community empowerment and capacity-building assistance are:

- \$200,000 provided in 1999 to Naco, Arizona, for development of a Brownfields project for the redevelopment of a 260-acre agro-business site into a business center.
- \$40,000 in 1999 for expansion of the Tijuana Children's Lead Prevention Program to analyze lead exposure in children living in *Colonia* Chilpancingo, near the *Metales y Derivados* abandoned lead smelter. Part of the program includes case management for children with blood lead levels found to be over 11 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ ), including education, outreach, and pottery exchange. Case management is performed by Tijuana community health representatives who are funded and trained as part of this project.
- \$135,000 in 1998 for the Nogales Children's Health Initiative for community outreach and education to reduce exposure to air toxics and improve the respiratory health of children in Nogales, Arizona. A local team composed of health professionals, city and county school officials, business representatives, members of citizens groups and clubs, academics, and parents, was funded to work with 775 families.

- \$19,000 in 1999 to implement a lead awareness program in Nogales, Arizona, spearheaded by Healthy Families, an outreach program that provides information to families on health factors that can improve the environment in the home. The program is part of the Child and Family Resources Office, which services communities in southeast Arizona.
- \$40,000 in 1997 to Project Concern for a demonstration project in 10 *colonias* in Tijuana designed to increase community understanding of environmental sanitation, demonstrate simple, low-cost, techniques for water storage, and improve hygiene.

The EPA grants awarded to border communities in 1995 and 1997 are summarized below. Additional grants were awarded in 2000.

### 1995 BORDER COMMUNITY GRANTS

PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	SUMMARY
Cochise County-Northeast Sonora Planning Project	Cochise County, Arizona	Addressed hazard prevention and reduction through binational training of community planners. Included stakeholder participation in reviewing the county land use plan.
Ambos Nogales Environmental Action Plan	Nogales, Arizona; Nogales, Sonora	Developed a public outreach program and established an environmental information center in Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales Sonora.
Building a Kumeyaay Environmental Strategy	Campo, California; Baja California	Developed of a water quality control plan to measure water quality trends, as well as a cross-border planning mechanism to enhance long-range environmental protection of the natural resources on Kumeyaay/Kumiai Community reservation lands.
Environmental Priorities, Needs, and Solutions in the San Diego-Tijuana Region	San Diego-Tijuana Border Region	Established a proactive environmental planning process through public outreach. An Environmental Task Force was created, which included members of government and environmental communities.
Mariposa Community Health Center	Nogales, Arizona; Nogales, Sonora	Focused on reducing, reusing, and recycling household solid waste, including hazardous waste. Designed household solid waste program in Nogales-Nogales.

PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	SUMMARY
Developing an Environmental Strategy for the Western Sonoran Desert	Western Sonoran Desert; U.S.-Mexico Border Region	Consisted of six workshops during which participants gained an understanding of their communities' relationship to the western Sonoran Desert, exploring how the desert contributes to their quality of life and traditions.
Tijuana River Watershed Toxics Data Project	Tijuana River Watershed  to facilitate transborder dialogue.	Assisted the Tijuana River Watershed Geographic Information System (GIS) Project in identifying information sources of toxics data required for GIS mapping. Developed outreach materials and activities
Environmental Plan of Los Dos Laredos	Laredo, Texas; Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas	Created a binational environmental plan that addressed environmentally sensitive issues between the sister cities.
AYUDA's Self Help Community A.I.R.E. Project	San Elizario, Texas	Created a long range community action environmental plan for the <i>colonia</i> area that incorporated public input through meetings, local campaigns, fairs, and a special focus on youth activities.
EIP, City of Donna, Texas	Donna, Texas	Developed a long range environmental plan that included public input and incorporation of pollution prevention practices.
Ecological Baseline Model for the U.S.-Mexico Border	Columbus, New Mexico; Palomas, Chihuahua	Established an ecological baseline assessment in the two communities, located approximately 70 miles west of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez.
Environmental Cooperation and Community Building Along the Rio Grande	Trans-Pecos region of West Texas	Incorporated pollution prevention and natural resource conservation issues through range management and multi-stakeholder participation.
EIP for Southwest Webb County, Texas	Southwest Webb County, Texas; Laredo, Texas	Developed an overall environmental improvement plan for an area that includes three large <i>colonias</i> .

**1997 BORDER COMMUNITY GRANTS**

PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	SUMMARY
Fermin Calderon Elementary Nature Trail	Del Rio, Texas; Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila	Constructed a nature trail for educational and public use at the Fermin Calderon Elementary School.
Interagency Coordination, Technical Exchange, and Chemical Emergency Response	San Diego, California; Tijuana, Baja California	Offered four different levels of training courses for firefighters and first responders in how to respond to chemical spills and other emergencies.
Water Protection and Hygiene Education	Tijuana, Baja California	Increased understanding of environmental sanitation, demonstrated techniques for water storage and disinfection, and improved hygiene-related behaviors.
Indoor Air Awareness Campaign	El Paso, Texas	Increased awareness of the risks associated with indoor air pollutants and provided education on prevention measures.
PROBEA: A Teacher Training Model	San Diego County, California; Tijuana, Baja California	Trained teachers in the principles of environmental education.
Border Environmental Resource Guide	California, Baja California; Arizona, Sonora	Compiled and published a Resource Guide on environmental resources and distributed the guide to all interested border communities and organizations.
AMIGO	Arizona Border Region	Brought industries together to share technologies that reduce waste and pollution and increase profits, worker safety, and health.
Colorado River Delta Restoration	Baja California, Sonora	Evaluated water quality and flows in the Colorado River wetlands and assessed wetlands and near-shore marine resources.
Nogales Community Outreach	Nogales, Arizona; Nogales, Sonora	Built community capacity for public outreach and expanded community participation in environmental and environmental health-related issues.

PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	SUMMARY
Rio Grande Watershed Mobile Exhibit	Hidalgo and Cameron counties, Texas	The grantee is producing a mobile exhibit focused on the Rio Grande watershed. The exhibit and associated materials will be presented to elementary schools.
Borderplex Environmental Center	Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties, Texas; Matamoros, Tamaulipas	Established a regional, binational education environmental center available to the public, which served as a gathering point for environmental data and information.
Pollution Prevention in Industrial Facilities in Mexico and Texas	Matamoros, Tamaulipas	Conducted an industrial source-reduction training workshop. Participants included environmental and community groups and citizens living near one or more of the chemical plants.
<i>Agua para Beber</i>	Webb County, Texas	Trained field workers to educate low-income residents on the safety of drinking water.
Environmental Management for Border Businesses	Border Regions of New Mexico and Texas	Improved the capabilities of border businesses to comply with environmental regulations in the United States and Mexico.